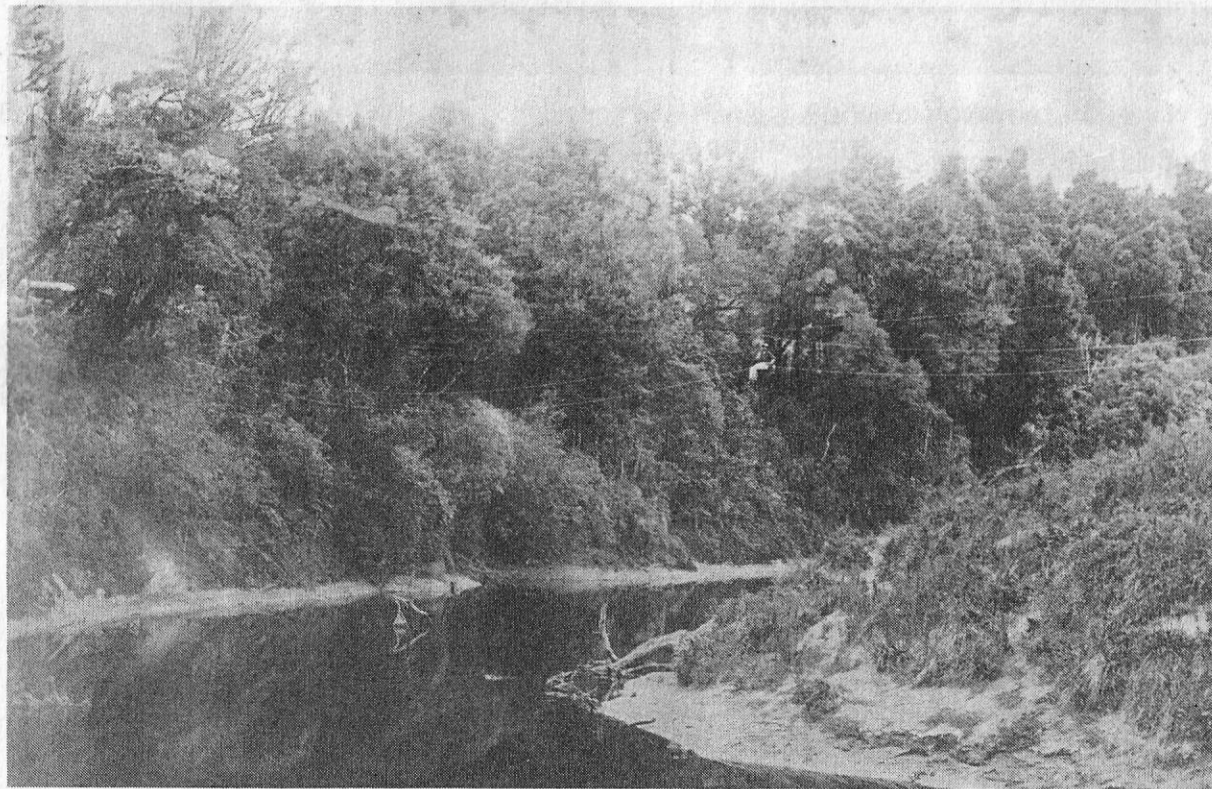


THE WOODEN BRIDGE

A bridge over the Waitara River at Purangi was urgently needed as John Ross, a Milsom settler, had already drowned there. The river was crossed in a cage suspended from a travelling block on a 5/8 inch cable stretching 62 metres about 13 metres above water. The settlers had to unload their drays nearly six kilometres from the river, sledge their goods to the crossing, sling them over the cable and pack them to their homes.

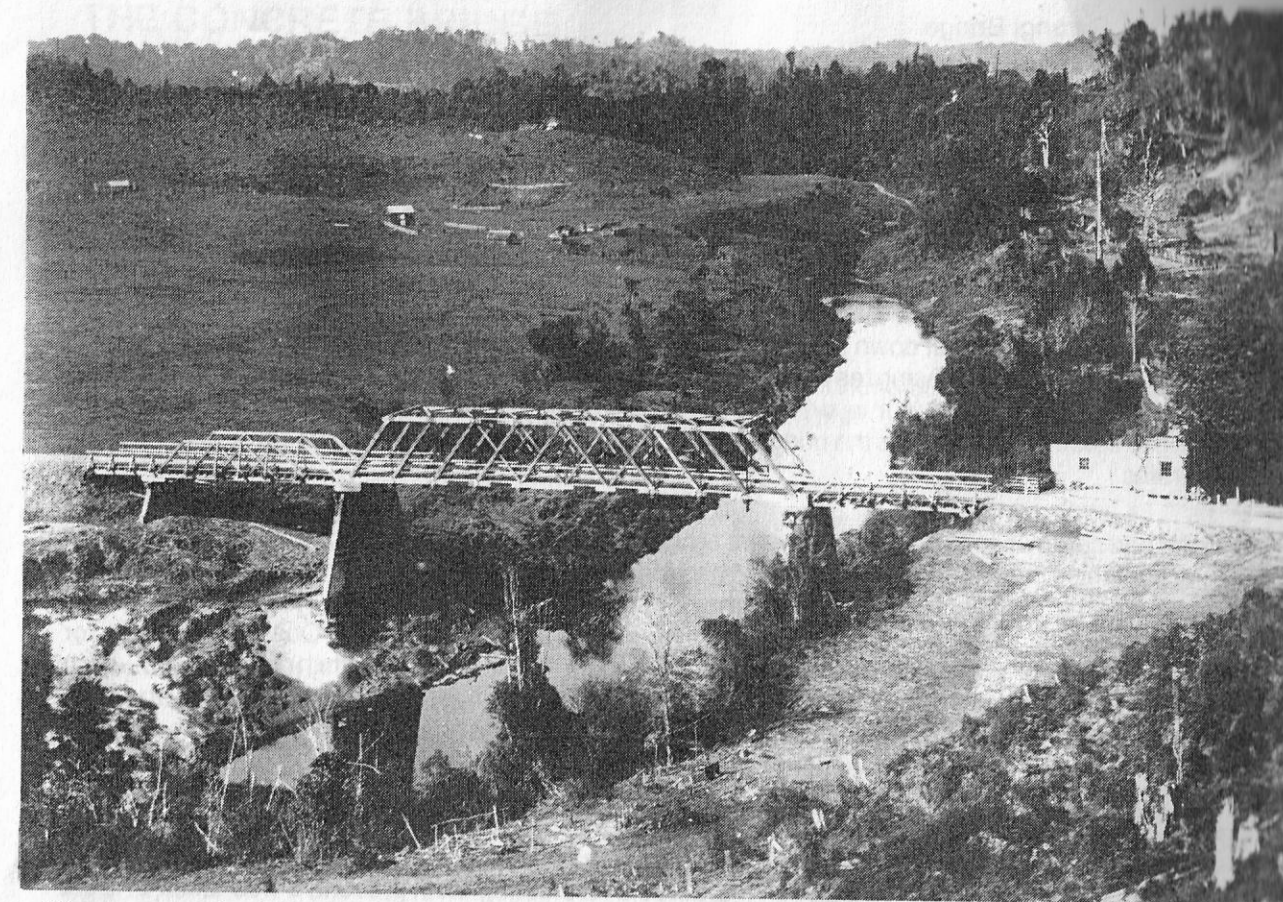
Mr E Hemmingham (school teacher) describes very graphically his crossing on the wire in 1896:

I came to the river bank and saw a cable stretched across the river from bank to bank and about 50 feet or more above it. Suspended to the cable was a packing case arrangement about three feet long by two feet wide, which was what my friend called a cage. This, as luck would have it, was across the river at the time, so I began to haul on a wire rope for all I was worth and soon had it at my feet. Then bundling my blankets into it I stood for a moment before embarking on my journey through mid-air. Then I stepped on board, and sitting on the edge of the box started to haul on the wire rope and pull myself across. It was my first experience of a cage and I did not feel very comfortable when after a few minutes' violent exertion I found myself pretty well exhausted and hanging like Mohammed's coffin, with the flooded river rushing by below me. I mustered up all the breath and courage I could find and resumed pulling and got safely across and shouldering my blankets made for the track towards Matau.



Cable across the Waitara River at Purangi. Seated on travelling gear (board suspended by two chains and self-operated by pulleys) is F J Webb. Cable was situated about five chains above the bridge.

The flying fox over the river must have been erected soon after 1891, probably before much improvement to the road. Tenders for the Purangi Bridge were called in 1896, but because of the difficulty of getting timber to the site the prices were considered too high and the money voted for it was transferred to widening Junction Road. Finally, in 1898, George Sangster began work and he was assisted by Walter Dowman who later became the bridge foreman for the Clifton County Council. The bridge cost £2,143 (\$4,286) to build.



The longest single span wooden bridge in the Southern Hemisphere. Purangi c1900. C.O. Smith's store beside the bridge, managed by Silk. McAllister Coll. Alexander Turnbull Library.

These two articles appeared in the Taranaki Budget and Weekly Herald:

29 April 1899 Purangi Bridge

It is a long time since a correspondent sent you any news from this part of the world, and in the meantime the district has made great progress as the rest of Taranaki has done.

It is not many years ago that this part of the province was considered a *terra incognita*; in fact it was only known to a few surveyors. Now we have a first class metalled road as far as 29 miles from New Plymouth, and 19 from Inglewood, the remaining 5 miles being a dray road, but still unmetalled. A loan was carried about a month ago which with the subsidy promised by the Government of £1 for £1, will metal about 3 more miles.

At Purangi we come to the Waitara River and the large timber bridge in the course of construction. The bridge is one of the finest in Taranaki. It is built in four spans, 124ft, 60ft, 40ft and a 24ft span, the total length being 248 ft. The piles of iron bark were driven in about 30ft, the upper piles being of totara and braces of kauri. The whole of the top structure is of kauri and the height from the level of the river to the top of the bridge is over 60ft.

The contractor, Mr George Sangster of Stratford, hopes to have the bridge finished in 4 or 5 weeks. It is proposed to have the official opening on the 24th of May when it is likely we shall have the presence of some notable person to open the bridge for traffic. A meeting of the settlers will be held tomorrow to arrange details of the ceremony.

The bridge will be a great boon to the settlers living on the other side of the river. It will also draw a lot of traffic from the East Road to Inglewood and New Plymouth.

The member for the district, Mr W Symes (who deserves well from the settlers in this part) will address a meeting here on Monday 1st of May.

A worse day than Wednesday last (Queen's Birthday) could not very well be. We were to have had the Purangi Bridge opened on that day, but the Fates or the clerk of the weather were against us. A few of the committee rolled up and decided that nothing could be done, and put off the ceremony till the next fine day.

On Thursday morning the weather was a trifle better, and about 12 o'clock the sun peeped out and it was decided to have the ceremony performed. Owing to the inclement weather, very few came from a distance, and it was confined to the local residents.

At about 2 o'clock about 90 sat down to lunch which consisted of ham and beef sandwiches, cakes of all sorts, and fruit, the drinkables being tea and beer. As Mr Symes, who was to have performed the ceremony did not turn up, Mr W H Murcott (surveyor) being the only Government servant present, in a few apt words, announced to those present that as the bridge had not been actually passed, he could only declare it open for light traffic.

He said he had come up to Purangi over 7 years ago, and had seen the ups and downs of the settlers and the many hardships they had to contend with, in bad roads, having to ford rivers, and hoped that now they were on the road to prosperity. Mr Sangster, the contractor for the bridge, also said a few appropriate words, after which the National Anthem was sung. Three cheers were given for the Queen, the contractor and the Hon John MacKenzie, Minister of Lands. A blue ribbon, the gift of Mr C O Smith of Inglewood, which had previously been stretched across the bridge, was cut by Mrs Dowman, she being the first lady to reside on the east side of the river. There was a great rush to be first across the bridge, and also to secure a portion of the ribbon.

Judging by the number wearing the blue ribbon, the whole population must have been Prohibitionists, and it would have pleased the heart of Mr T E Taylor to have been present. But appearances are not everything and are sometimes deceptive, and although there was a little strong drink present, it was taken in great moderation.

After the ceremony, sports were held in the adjoining township and were much enjoyed. I believe it is the intention to have sports again in the summertime with any surplus funds over. I have omitted to say that the bridge was gayly dressed with bunting, the Union Jack taking pride of place. A large banner was also stretched across the main span with the words 'Welcome to Purangi' worked in bright green leaves on a white background. This had a very good effect.

Great credit is due to Mrs Chapman for the successful issue of the affair, for had it not been for her, the affair would have been put off till the summer, when the enthusiasm would have perhaps died. When so many helped it is impossible to mention anyone, but I cannot close this without thanking the ladies of Purangi and the Committee for a pleasant and enjoyable day's pleasure, although the weather was against it. A dance which was held in the Matau schoolroom was largely attended, and was a great success.

(Actual opening day was 1 June 1899.)

The bridge lasted for over 50 years though for the latter part of its life it was held up by steel cables. It was said to have been the longest wooden span in the southern hemisphere.

The Daily News reported the following:

- 30.11.1946 - Purangi Bridge repairs £500.

- 10.7.1951 From Inglewood County Council notes.

Last month the condemned Purangi bridge was barricaded to prevent its use for cattle. A farmer in the district was alleged to have cut the barricade bolts and driven cattle over. Engineer, Mr E H Adams, considered this had made it unsafe for pedestrians, and wanted it dismantled. Finally decided to barricade bridge against cattle again and seek legal advice.

- 11.8.1953 - Purangi Bridge almost destroyed by Inglewood County Council (by dropping in the Waitara River) because of the danger to school children.

- 13.1.1954 - Purangi Bridge finally destroyed by gelignite.

THE CONCRETE BRIDGE

The Taranaki Herald dated March 1956 featured a photo and the following article

40,000 Miles to Work in Last 80 Weeks

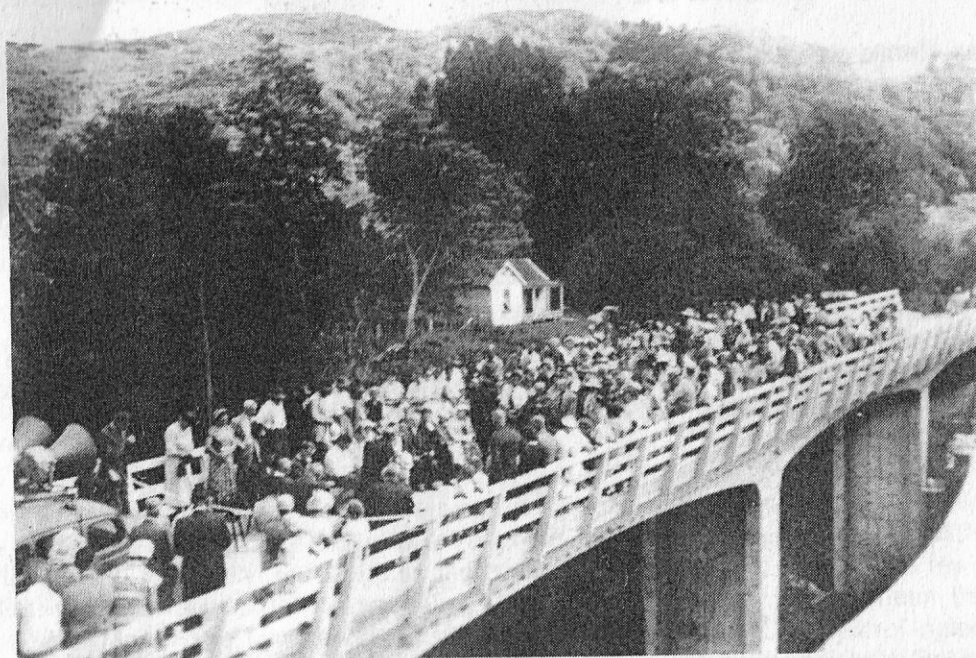
In the last year and a half, a firm of New Plymouth contractors and their staff have travelled approximately 40,000 miles over some of North Taranaki's most tortuous back-country roads in daily travel between their homes and their work - the spanning of the deep, fast flowing reaches of the Waitara River at Purangi, 36 miles inland from New Plymouth.

Although only a one-car structure it has proved one of the biggest bridge-building contracts in the province. It has cost £30,000 and 80 weeks of effort to enable the contractors, Messrs McMillan and Julian of New Plymouth, to bring the bridge within sight of completion.

WAITARA RIVER BRIDGE — PURANGI INGLEWOOD AND STRATFORD COUNTIES



Opened by the Minister of Works, HON. W. S. GOOSMAN
8th March, 1956



Part of the crowd on the bridge on opening day 8 March 1956. House in background built by Herbert Silk.



Peter (A J) Webb, L A Alexander, Muriel Laurence and Frank Laurence, cutting the ribbon for souvenirs.

The massive false-work - 60,000 feet of timber was involved in the boxing for pouring the concrete for the continuous decking - is now being removed by a mobile triangular crane and a new tender is being called for forming the huge approaches required at each end. When it is finished the only direct access to North Taranaki for the many settlers in the area between Purangi and the Stratford-Whangamomona highway will be restored.

Still standing alongside the new bridge is the pedestrian swing bridge erected to give some access on the site of the old structure. The original bridge built in 1899 of solid kauri and totara, was dropped into the river before the new bridge was started.



Mrs Muriel Laurence cutting the ribbon at the official opening of the Purangi Bridge. Mr W N Bertrand and his daughter Myrna are in the background.



Enjoying refreshments in the booth --, --, Terry Devine, Les O'Donnell and Dick Watkins. 8 March 1956.



Peter Webb, Roy Corkill, Madeline Watherston (nee Corkill) and Lesa Webb. Bridge Opening 1956.



Mary Mounsey, Dorothy Mounsey, Lesa Webb and Sadie Watkins enjoying a function celebrating the opening of the new concrete bridge at Purangi on 8 March 1956.

Mr J E Julian, working on the job this week, described the old bridge as a real menace. It was closed to all vehicular traffic because of the near-collapse of one side and before he would risk sending his men down to the river bed to begin work on the pier holes for the new bridge the old bridge was demolished.

Four charges of explosive were placed in each bottom cord and discharged electrically, and the settlers on either side of the river, using winches, horses and saws, spent 10 days recovering the wreckage.

Mr Julian summarising the building progress said that a 60-foot high shaft was raised from the base to the deck level.

A four-ton hammer was used to drive six piles under the next pier until each had a bearing value of 35 tons. The pier itself was 30 feet high before the capping.

For the abutments, 50-foot piles were driven by the hammer. They had to be lengthened, however, as they were rammed 53 feet into the ground before they were satisfactorily based.

River Flooded

The river flooded before the final pier was built and washed a large amount of the bank away. Plans for this section had to be altered in favour of a nest of piers, rather like an ordinary table when they were capped. The pier was then raised on this unusual base but had to be extended from 50 feet to 77 feet. Foundation work involved in the piers lasted 13 months.

Boxing was then placed up the sides of the piers and baulks of timber installed to take the weight of wet concrete for the decks and girders. Mr Julian estimated that the total weight to be supported 60 feet above the water was 200 tons.

No falsework could be erected across the centre span so three trusses were built to carry the 80 tons weight on that section. Deflection allowed in the work was one inch and Mr Julian's crew got away with five-eighths of an inch.

To span the 250 feet across the river valley, 53 tons of steel were used, the girders averaging four feet in depth and 15 inches in width. The bridge was raised six feet above the level of the old bridge because of the phenomenal river rises experienced at Purangi.

On May 5 last, the contractors watched the level rise rapidly by 38 feet to within two feet of the trusses and on record are past floods when 18 inches of silt was deposited on the floor of a house built above the level of the old bridge and, in another house on about the same level, the water ruined a bag of sugar left sitting on the kitchen table.

Only One Hour Lost

Despite the distances of travel involved for the workmen and all the materials, no more than an hour has been lost on the job, Mr Julian said. And that is based on a regular 12-1/2 hour day. When it rains, which is surprisingly rarely for a district that looks perpetually damp, bridgework is carried on in a huge covered workshop.

One of the most serious delays occurred before the decking spanned the river. The contractors to move their winch 250 feet from the Inglewood side to the Stratford side had to take it 60 miles through Kaimata, Tariki and Stratford.

There is no electric power in the Purangi district and the contractors generate all their requirements with their own 85 hp diesel, driving a 50 kw generator to drive piles, power the concrete mixer, as well as supply power to the construction camp.

Mr Julian estimated that it would take him two months to remove all the falsework and it was evident from an inspection of the bridge that a deal of time and effort will be required to connect the bridge ends with the roadway. On the Stratford side, the bridge finishes about 20 feet above ground level and the road peters out about 50 yards away.

But already the residents, to whom the bridge is one of the most important necessities of life, are raising funds with dances and other functions to make the opening of the bridge a festive occasion.

The bridge was officially opened on 8 March 1956 by the Minister of Works, Hon W S (Stan) Goosman, and the ribbon was cut by Mrs Muriel Laurence, wife of Mr Frank Laurence, Chairman of the Inglewood County Council. The function in the Purangi Hall afterwards was a great success.



Purangi Bridge was built by these men. Left to right: Syd Standing, Henry Nuku, Albie Hayward, Jack Julian, Steve Watkin.

BOARDING HOUSE

As already stated the boarding house was built almost as soon as the first bridge was erected. It was built by Frederick William Pennington, and the front room used as a school room from 1901 until the school was built in 1909. It has in turn been owned by Charlie Dewar who installed a billiard table in the old school room, Mr Watson, Mr Barnett, Mr Hanover and Mr Watkins. It is now derelict and presently owned by Robert Hutton.

F W Pennington was the parent or guardian of 13 children enrolled at the Purangi School between 12.9.1901 and 19.11.1907, so it seems as if all five bedrooms in the boarding house were put to good use, and the children only had to cross the corridor to attend school.

George Hanover and his wife Blanche (nee Lichtwark) ran the boarding house, store and coach between 1914-1918. They must have led a very busy life. Their son Wally who was born in the boarding house has in his possession the store ledger book which details accounts between 1914-1918. Apart from detailing purchases by account holders, the reader can gain an insight into the lives of some families. Often accounts at the store were settled by means other than cash or cheque, eg cows, pigs, firewood, drilling, butter, labour, etc. The charge for telephone calls was sixpence (5 cents) and the price charged for carrying messages was two shillings and sixpence (25c). All through the accounts, parcels are charged at 3d each; we presume that is the delivery or carrying charge. Tea cost 1/6 (15 cents), bed 1/6, breakfast 1/6 and lunch 1/6.

The shop carried a very comprehensive range of goods. In 1915 this would have been a typical account for the month:

Cup and saucer 3/9, butter 1/-, oil 2/4, soda 3d, pins 4d, tea 2/-, lace and ribbon 3/8, wool 2/4, candles 8d, phone 6d, lace 2/-, phone 6d, soap 1/-, biscuits 2/-, lace 1/-, cotton 2d, candles 8d, bisc 10d, lace 1/0, cigs 6d, bread 11d, cigs 1/-, onions 1/- meat 1/6, butter 1/6, sago 9d, tea 2/-, tea 2/-, soap 1/-, blue 6d, biscuits 2/-, jam 1/-, sugar 1/- bread 11d, soda 1/-, whiting 1/-, biscuits 1/-, zebra 6d, jam 6d, cornflour 8d, biscuits 2/-, butter 1/-, tongues 1/6, sago 1/-, meat 1/6, onions 6d, phone 6d, matches 1/-, candles 8d, milk 7d, cheese 2/6, nails 4d, milk 7d, sugar 12/6, news 1/- parcel 3d. Cash lent 50/- (£2.10.0 = \$5) Total for month £18.1.10.

You could buy gelignite for 10/-, tobacco 1/-, lifebuoy soap 8d, cocoa 1/2, elastic 5d, egg powder 7d, toothpowder 6d, currants 1/6, caustic 1/- mustard 1/-, nibs 2d, envelopes 4d, nugget 6d, oats 1/9, camphor 6d, kerosene 1/6, rice 1/-, prunes 2/-, painkiller 1/6, ink 6d, pants 12/-, rope 1/-, pollard 7/- pipe 1/6, fowls 3/-, pig rings, 1/2 ton of coal 9/3, camp oven 6/6 etc.

A lot of medicine was sold to some people, others preferred lollies, and still others cigarettes and tobacco. A small amount of beer and wine was charged out as well.

When Mr Harry Watkins was the storekeeper he used to operate a manual petrol pump alongside the boarding house in the late 1930s, early 1940s. Drums of petrol were stored in a shed and an old-fashioned hand pump bowser with a glass indicator was used to measure fuel into customers' vehicles.

Listed below are the account holders between 1914 - 1918. Many of the accounts were for board, fares, hire of horses, cartage, etc; even one for admission to a dance!

Askew J (Pukeho)	Dobson, Jack (Kaimata)	Moody T (Matau)
Amo, Patu	Dowman P	Morey R J (Tarata)
Andrews K (Tarata)	Davies, Fred c/- J Campbell	Mackie, Geo (Kaimata)
Ayers, Pat (Matau)		Mackie E G (Pukeho)
	Education Board	Martin C (Kaimata)
Burr H (Pukeho)	Evans E (Matau)	Matthews, Gamlin & Co
Barnett A H (Purangi)	Epo, Tume & Co (camp account)	Moles Wm (Purangi)
Burwell (Kaimata)	Eggleton F J (Pukeho)	Moanrua
Brightwell (Tarata)		Milsom (Matau)
Burkhardt P (Kaimata)	Fairebend W (Purangi)	Moore (Pukeho School)
Blackburn Bros (Tarata)	Field B J (Purangi)	Miller, Frank (Kaimata)
Bennet E (Bristol Rd Inglewood)	Fougere G (Tarata)	Morton, Geo (Inglewood)
Burr, Jack & Lambert, Frank	Forrester F C (Purangi)	Matau School
Burr, Jim (Pukeho)	Flintoff J (Tarata)	Matau Bachelors
Bathhurst (Kaimata)	Fabish B J (Purangi)	Mounsey R (Purangi)
Burr, Jack	Fenton (Pukeho)	McCoard W (Matau)
Brough, Jack (Purangi)	Fletcher N (Stratford)	McGavin, Peter c/- Sander (Tarata)
Bocock L (Kaimata)		
Bottcher H H c/- Geo Wilks	Grieve Jno (Pukeho)	McAsey, Leo (Matau)
Buckley R (Inglewood)	Garret C (Purangi)	McLaggan (Inglewood)
Bulloch T (Stratford)	George, Harry	McMullian Bros (Matau)
Burr, Marjorie	Guilford Mrs (Tarata)	McAsey, Len c/- Phillips (Matau)
Buchanan W (Purangi)	George, Syd (Tarata)	McLeod Mrs
Brown F c/- Fletcher (Purangi)	Graham J (Matau)	
	Giles Tom (Inglewood)	Nichols & Son (Inglewood)
	Gudgeon Geo	Neilson H R (Kaimata)
Campbell J (Purangi)		Naina, Peter
Campbell Wm (Purangi)		
Clifton County	Hartigan M J (Tarata)	O'Riley Bros (Taramouku)
Corkill A (Tarata)	Hanover R J (Tarata)	
Crochetto R (Kaimata)	Hopkirk A (Cambridge)	Phillips R H (Ngaere)
Chamney & Swan (Tarata)	Hale T (Tarata)	Parr R c/- Sander (Tarata)
Crozier Wm (Tarata)	Hinty C (Tarata)	Paterson R Jnr (Pukeho)
Crowe I (Tarata)	Hamerton Chis (Inglewood)	Paterson, Jim
Chapman P (Tarata)	Huiroa (Tarata)	Paynter Bros (Tarata)
Cantle c/- Hinty (Tarata)	Herlihy Wm (Kaimata)	Peterson H & Co (Inglewood)
Charlotte (Purangi)	Harrison (Matau)	Paterson R Snr (Tarata)
Codd, Walter (Inglewood)	Hogan T (Tarata)	Parehore
Chapman Mrs Geo (Purangi)	Holley (Matau)	Pearce T (Matau)
Christianson J (Tarata)	Hinga (Purangi)	Potini c/- Wilks (Purangi)
Chadwick, Jimmy c/- Phillips		Pike & Waters
Caney J H (Inglewood)	Isaac (Purangi)	Pappa (Purangi)
Chapman, Tom (Matau)		Purangi School
Cutler (Kaimata)	Kapua Te (Purangi)	Putt H
Chong A (Ratapiko)	Kennington S J (Matau)	Pukeho School
Crozier C C (Inglewood)	Kaimata School	Purangi Hall
Cemetery Board	King, Newton (Stratford)	Purangi Tennis Club
Cave (Tarata)	Kahu (Purangi)	
	Kaimata Tennis Club	Rolfe A (Matau)
Dowman, Harry C (Purangi)	Kerr C c/- Young Wm	Rawlinson, Geo (Matau)
Dowman, Oliver (Purangi)	Kimi (Purangi)	Randal (Junction Road)
Dowman, Geo (Purangi)	King M (Tarata)	Ridd Milking Co
Dowman L (Purangi)		Ross W (Purangi)
Dowman, Walt (Matau)	Lambert, Harry (Pukeho)	Ranganui, Kanika (Purangi)
Death E A (Tarata)	Lambert, Frank (Pukeho)	Ross T (Matau)
Death S (Kaimata)	Lambert & Burr	Reihana Mrs (Purangi)
Dowman C F	Lovell R	Ru, Mahara (Purangi)
Drummond J (Tarata)	Lightfoot W (Inglewood)	
Dowman, Wm Snr (Purangi)		

Smillie Wm (Matau)	Taylor A E (Purangi)	Webb F J (Purangi)
Street L (Tarata)	Tarata Factory	Woisin W F (Purangi)
Stott M (Purangi)	Taranaki County	Wiseley, Geo c/- C Hamilton
Sander H (Pukeho)	Thomson F M	Williams, Jido (Tarata)
Sutherland Bros (Inglewood)	Tichlon Bros (Eltham)	Winfield J W (Inglewood)
Smith G A	Thomason W (Inglewood)	Webster (Kaimata)
Smith, Geo (Tarata)	Tarata School	Watt A (Pukeho)
Standish F M (Tarata)	Tainui (Tarata)	Williams W (Tarata Factory)
Simons, Harry (Kaimata)	Tume W & Co (camp account)	Waite H (Tarata)
Smith, Joe	Tume, Epo & Co (camp acct)	Wickstead R (Kaimata)
Smart Bros (Inglewood)	Tume, Tutanuku (Purangi)	Wilks, Geo (Purangi)
Schrieber C (Waitui)	Tarata Dog Club	Weston T (Kaimata)
Stuart R (Tarata)	Taylor, Andy (Taramauku)	Whettu, Tume (Purangi)
Simpson Mrs (Pukeho)	Thompson Mrs (Kaimata)	Watson D (Inglewood)
Smith, Bob (Matau)	Tarata Bachelors	West c/- Clare (Tarata)
Schrieber A (Purangi)	Topping W (Tarata)	Wilks A (Purangi)
Surrey E A (Inglewood)	Tarata Ladies Ball Committee	Waitara Harbour
Scott J c/- L & M	Tilley J (Purangi)	
Sutherland, Jack (Inglewood)	Thompson J H (Stratford)	Young W H (Stratford)
	Tohe (Purangi)	
	Terril, Fred c/- J Brough (Purangi)	
	Trigger L (Pukeho)	
	Taki, Moana c/- W Good (Te Wera)	
	Templar R C (Tarata)	



A painting by Alice Mason of the Boarding House in 1990.

THE SCHOOL - 1901-1948

Very shortly after the bridge was built a start was made to build a Boarding House which had a large room to be used as a school room, and a fee of 10/- a week was paid to Mr F W Pennington the proprietor. An entry in the Education Board building files dated 1.5.1908 states, "The present school is in the boarding house, which has been held as a school since 1.9.1901 at a rental of 10/- per week."

In fact earlier in 1901 the Daily News carried this report:

Thursday 11.4.1901 Education Board. Petition from Purangi settlers for a school, read at meeting.
Recommended that an 'aided' school be established and worked in conjunction with Matau School.

Purangi shared a teacher with Matau, three days a week in each school. Apparently Mr Humphries, the first teacher, was paid £100 per annum and had to provide his own horse.

1.5.1908 Entry in building file states, "The Department has now refused to pay the 10/- and the owner will not take less. As there are 17 children of school age and approximately 20 families in the district and no school within four miles of the proposed school, I strongly support the erection of a building as per plan attached."
Signed W A Ballantyne, Inspector.

The dimensions of the school are 22'0" x 17'6", and the porch 17'6" x 8'0", a total of 385 sq ft.

A grant of £250 was authorised on 13 June 1908 for the purpose of building a school at Purangi (estimated cost £405 included out-buildings).

The Budget published on 20.2.1909, carried the following report by its correspondent on the opening of the school on 5.2.1909 -

"All Purangi and the surrounding district were attracted by the opening of the new school last Friday which the Education Board have just had built - Mr R W Bond, of New Plymouth, being the contractor, and he has made a very good job of his contract. The proceedings were opened by a concert in which the room was packed by a large audience, fully 130 people being present.

The programme consisted of the following: Pianoforte duets by Mesdames Trist and Barnett and Mrs Thomas and Miss Pennington; songs by Mesdames Glasgow and Thomas and the Messrs Costall Bros; recitations by Mr E Dewar and Miss Pennington and Minnie Pennington, readings by Messrs V H Long and H N Silk, vocal duets by Mesdames Barnett and Silk and Messrs Costall and Silk. Mr Cameron brought down the house by comic songs in costumes. Mr F W Pennington occupied the chair.

After the concert supper was handed round from the marquee which had been erected alongside the school. The supper had been supplied by the ladies of the district who had all worked hard to make this important part a success.

The room was then cleared for dancing which was enthusiastically kept going until daylight appeared, Mesdames Trist, Glasgow, Barnett and Thomas and Messrs W Drake and C F Dowman providing the music. The whole affair was voted a great success and hopes were indulged in that many more social gatherings would be held.

I understand the school picnic will be held about the end of the month when it is hoped a large gathering will result."

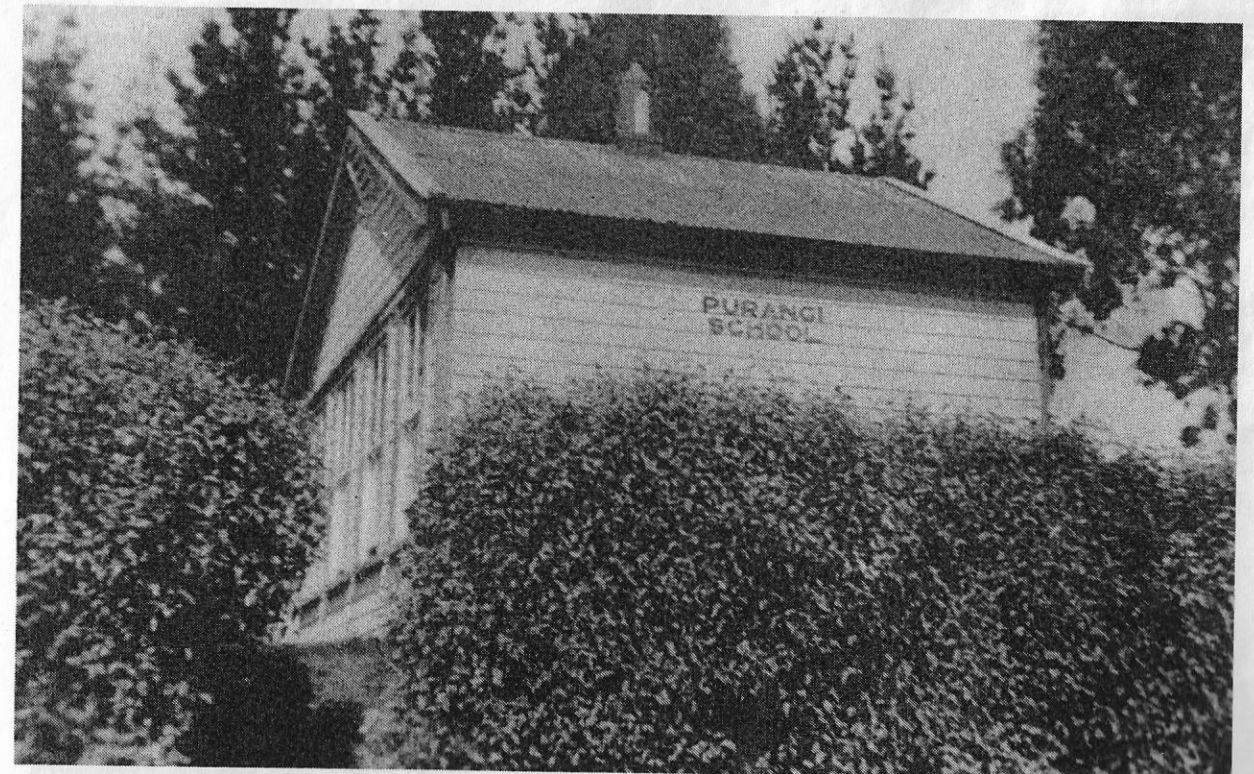
The school children first used individual slates to write on but these were later replaced by blackboards.

Some of the early school committees comprised:

1903 F W Pennington, H N Silk, J Graham, A B Leech, Mrs Dowman.
1904 Mrs Leech, Mr F J Webb, F W Pennington, Mrs Dowman, H N Silk.
1905 F W Pennington, F N Silk, W Newman, F J Webb, E S Riggale.
1906 F W Pennington, W Newman, H N Silk, L Kemp, C Andresen.

Teachers

Mr Humphries until the end of 1905.
S E (Sam) Meredith, 1905-1907.
Mrs Farnham was a relieving teacher in 1907.
Victor Howard Long, known by the children as Very Horrid Long, taught from 1908 till 1910. He had a very-hard-to-catch horse which he used to hobble!
Miss Hammerton, 1910-1911.
Miss Mollie Stott, 1911-1912.
Misses Tiplady and Bhewman.
Miss Frances Webb, 1917-1924.
Miss E Burkhart, 1924-1925.
Miss Frances Webb, 1926-1927.
Miss M. Williams, 1927-1928.
Mr Maingay, 1929 (part-time with Matau) lived in a portable batch on a corner of school section.
Mr R W Bates, 1929-1930.
Mr C Cummings boarded at Stewart's on the Mangaoapa Road. He later became a school inspector.
John R Don, 1931-1932 and part of 1933.
Fred Turner appointed April 1933.
Mr A Sampson, 1933-1936.
Mr G A Kenny, 1934-30.6.1939 (school downgraded). He bought a new 1937 V8 car.
Mr I T Nicholas, 3.7.1939 - 18.8.1939 (one term).
Miss Alice Garcia, 4.9.1939 - 19.12.1941. Later she became the school inspectors' secretary.
Miss Thelma Brown, 24.4.1942 - 3.5.1945.
Miss D Dawson, 22.5.1945 - 15.8.1945.
J Kaye, 4.9.1945 - 10.5.1946.
Miss Phyllis Gornall (uncertified teacher), 4.6.1946 - 25.2.1947.
Miss Beatrice Webb (uncertified teacher), 3.3.1947 - 7.5.1948.



Purangi School c1930s with eleagnus hedge.



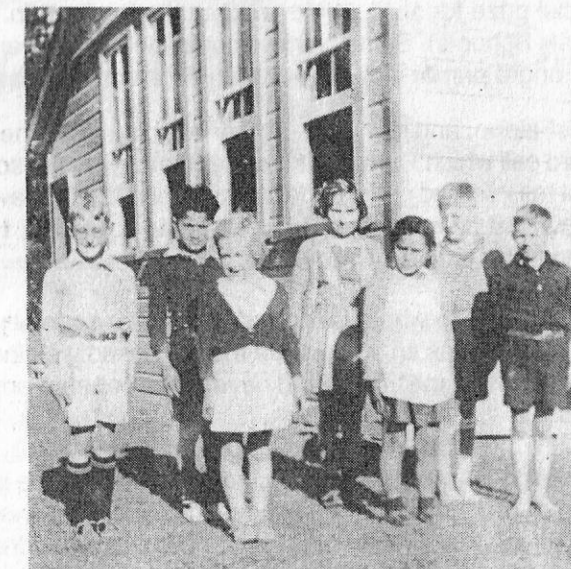
Teacher - Mr S Meredith and pupils outside school room, then in boarding house, c1906. Pupils believed to be: --, --, Minnie, Flora and Ruth Pennington, Frances Webb, --, Bert Silk, Peter Webb, Fred Silk, Bill Bertrand, Alf and Lionel Pennington.



Purangi School children with their slates. Early 1920s.



A group of Purangi School pupils about 1927. The Bertrand brothers are wearing the ties.



L to R: Steve Watkins, Lou Nuku, Audrey Mounsey, Brian Watkins, Selwyn Mounsey. Front: Rene Watkins and Hazel Nuku.

On 15.7.26 the school caught fire. Fortunately there was only interior damage as the fire was put out by the residents. Repairs cost the Education Board £21.6.11 and £5 was forwarded to Mrs Queenie Bertrand for raising the alarm.

Reminiscences from Mr John R Don, A Former Teacher at Purangi School, 1931 - 1932

I was appointed to the position of Sole Teacher at the Purangi School on 1 July 1931. This is about 60 years ago and I am now 83 years of age. I shall write only of a few matters which come readily to mind.

First Days: Heavy rains kept most pupils at home. I had one pupil for the first day or two but gradually attendance crept up to about 15 pupils. Several very young pupils from far up the Waitara River did not appear for several weeks. I was told that they had to cross the Waitara River twice by dug-out canoe and follow a papa mud road for about four miles in order to reach the school. I had a serious talk with the father of these children and persuaded him to send them as often as possible. He promised to co-operate. There were, if I remember rightly seven children in all from that family who were on the school roll. I was told that they were living in a one-roomed whare along with their mother and father and several preschool children. It was the time of the Great Depression and there was much hardship in Taranaki as elsewhere.

There were five children from the Bertrand Family attending the school. They all came on horseback, often three or four on one horse. Mr W Bertrand was the Chairman of the Purangi School Committee and Mr Fletcher was the Secretary. The committee was very helpful and tolerant of a greenhorn from the city! (Dunedin).

The school was "equipped" with blackboards, a box of chalk and some raffia - for "handwork", but we had plenty of good firewood to keep us warm on frosty mornings. Times were hard, and the national grant for education had been cut from £4 million to £3 million.

One of the first questions that I asked of the school children when most had returned after the heavy rains was; "Can you sing any songs?" "Yes sir!" they said, and immediately burst into the most beautiful rendering of E Pari Ra; Poi Waka, etc. I can hear them still! I had never before heard such natural harmony.

They were all fine children, keen to learn and as intelligent as any children anywhere in the country. They behaved like one big family!

I used to take the children on nature-study walks into the forest areas (now cleared away). We studied all the native birds and plants and sometimes rested and sang appropriate songs such as Deep In The Forest - I Know A Fairy Glade, etc. A kingfisher nesting in an old Rimu tree was not appreciative and dived at us several times. A shining cuckoo (pīpiwharauoa) once flew at high speed against a school window and stunned itself. Fergus rushed out and brought it in for all to see and handle carefully. It gradually recovered and flew away to freedom.

The children won a very special prize for an illustrated native plant collection. (A Chessman Prize - The competition open to all Taranaki Schools). Some children could identify as many as 60 native plants from tiny leaf specimens, and one bright primer was able to name correctly at least 30 plants.

I often explored the local forest alone, and late one summer evening as I emerged from the forest in the half-light, I heard a peculiar bird call which I had never before heard. Then absolutely silently, a very large dark brown bird - over two feet tall - settled on a ponga stump only a few feet away. It had the perfect face of an owl, which I then thought must have escaped from a private collection. I now believe however that it was a Laughing Owl reputed to be extinct or almost so.

The Curator of the Dominion Museum to whom I reported the matter several years later, confirmed that the forest of the Upper Waitara River was an area where the supposedly extinct Laughing Owl might still have existed in 1931. Mr B Bertrand told me that he had never seen or heard any such bird but he believed that I could well have done so.

On one occasion I had the privilege of attending a Church of England service in the beautiful little church behind the school. Bishop Bennett conducted the service which included the dedication of a Memorial Cross. During the service, an aged Maori woman, reputed to be over a hundred years old, stood up and vigorously disputed something which the Bishop had said. But he had the last word, which caused the old woman to subside and apparently submit totally to the higher authority.

No so long ago I returned to the church and saw the cross and the Roll of Honour which contained the names of several of my former pupils. They had served their country and made the supreme sacrifice. A feeling of sadness overcame me as I stood in silence there and returned in memory to the happy days of long ago, when we had worked and played together at the little school on the hill. Purangi School!

A Teacher Remembers - Thelma Stockman (nee Brown) 1942 - 1945

"I well remember arriving in Purangi to teach at the little school on the hill. A very green, new teacher full of enthusiasm and hope. There was no power and I was studying from the Correspondence School to complete my teachers certificate. Still had four subjects to do. So the old candle burnt well into the night.

What a great welcome I received from the families who lived there - Mr and Mrs H Watkins (who gave me first class board at two pounds a week), Peter and Lesa Webb, the Mounseys, Bertrands, Sadie and Dick Watkins, the Savage Family, the Nukus and the Corkills. All these people supported me and proud to be good friends.

The war was on and petrol was rationed. I had a little Morris 8 and got petrol to get to nearest town (Inglewood) once a week, so was able to go to my parents home in that town every weekend.

We made our own entertainment and I recall some happy evenings around the piano, Sadie Watkins playing and the rest of us singing. The cream lorry went out daily and returned in the afternoon with mail and extra provisions for the store which was run by Harry Watkins and his wife. The post office was also in the store which at one time had been a big boarding house where coaches used to stop.

The children were a happy band ever willing to do the odd jobs around the school. We used to swim in the river and go for nature walks in the beautiful bush and on several occasions we saw a kiwi (the bird variety not the human!)

There was a swing bridge across the river. On very wet days I would keep an eye on the river and if it threatened to rise too high I would send the Nuku children home as they used the bridge to come and go from school. Needless to say Henry N (who didn't really like school) would keep reminding me to watch "The Waitara"!

New Zealand Education Department.



CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY.

(STANDARD VI.)

(Under Regulations for the Inspection and Examination of Schools, Clauses 19 to 22.)

This is to Certify that Arthur J.T. Webb
of Purangi School, in the Education District
of Taranaki, has fulfilled the requirements of a Certificate
of Proficiency.

(Signed): A. J. T. Webb

Official designation: Inspector.

Date on which the requirements were fulfilled: 13th May, 1914.

Age of Candidate at such date as reported from the School records: 14 years 10 months. [OVER.]
(Age not certified.)

5,000/12/11-10790

The hall was used for school functions like end of year concerts, farewells to soldiers, plus an occasional fund-raising effort for patriotic purposes.

I left Purangi in 1945, to be married, with very happy memories of the time spent in your district.

In those days the children and teachers did all the school cleaning - also cut the wood for the big open fire. I also remember the scrumptious peaches and nectarines that grew on trees in the school grounds."

In May 1942 the school teacher (Miss Brown) was a passenger in a car driven by Mr Savage of Purangi, which was involved in an accident with a lorry at the foot of the Tarata Saddle. Her injuries kept her from teaching duties for a term.

Some extracts from the Purangi School Log Book make interesting reading.

1937

.10/12 Punished H (2) for taking father's watch and bringing it to school. Punished D (1) for swearing.
.17/12 The year will conclude with a social and Christmas Tree in the Hall tonight. Each child is to receive a book. The gardens have all been cleaned as much as the weather would allow. The desks have all been re-varnished. Tools are all in good order. The ragwort along the road has been cut.

1938

.4/2 Punished D and W (1) for being dirty.
.18/2 Punished B (1) and F (1) for writing on outhouse and D and H (1) for swearing.
.21/2 School potatoes were dug giving very good yield. 108 lbs total. (approx 50 kgs).
.6/5 Committee and Householders' Meeting held on 2/5. Ragwort to be sprayed during holidays. Received notice re Pig Demonstration on Wednesday at Waitara Freezing Works. Children to be taken to exhibition of Coronation Robes at New Plymouth on 24/5.
.24/6 Children gained several prizes at Winter Show. School placed 2nd in seedling pines.
.19/8 Attendance has been seriously affected by measles epidemic. Only 3 children at school.
.14/10 School regraded to Grade II. School to be used tomorrow as a Polling Booth for General Election.
.28/11 Calf judging at Pukeho.

1939

- .5/5 School commences at 9.15 am during winter term.
- .9/6 Malted milk powder arrived and children have begun having it today.
- .25/7 Weather is very cold, light snow having fallen in a few places.
- .28/7 2 loads of wood arrived for school per Mr Mounsey Snr.
- .1/8 P sustained a deep cut in her forehead as the result of colliding with a half-open doorway. I bandaged the injury and sent her home in the charge of her brother.
- .2/8 Punished W (2) for filthy actions.
- .10/8 Received 50lb tin of malted milk from Health Dept. F and P will enter the Potato Growing Competition.
- .17/8 Received Pig Club entry forms. 2 entries.
- .21/11 Anglican Minister commenced Bible Study at school today. He intends visiting school at 1 pm Tuesdays once a fortnight.

1940

- .14/2 Mr Pascoe visited school today to remove bach to Pukeho. He and the other workmen are sleeping in the school tonight.
- .15/2 Bach removed to Pukeho today.
- .26/2 During the weekend Purangi experienced one of the worst floods in its history. Watkins, Bertrands, Nukus and Bevins were flooded out, the water in Watkins' house being over three feet deep on Saturday night. Those families spent Saturday night in the school. During the removal from her house to the school, old Mrs Watu, who has been ill for some weeks, died, her body being then left in the shelter-shed until this morning. Today there are only six children at school, the Maori children being absent on account of their grandmother's death. They also have no clothes to wear, as they had been damaged in the flood.
- .1/5 Children pulled mangolds and sugarbeet and took to Bertrands. Mrs Bertrand has given us 15/- (\$1.50) for the crop.
- .19/6 Sent £1.1.0 to Sick and Wounded Appeal.
- .19/7 Sent £3.10.0 into Inglewood Patriotic Committee.
- .5/9 District Nurse and Nurse Inspector visited school today to inoculate native children for typhoid. Left ointment for treatment of skin trouble.

1941

- .10/3 Sent away for swimming certificates for the following:-
 - Bea Webb 25 yds
 - Henry Nuku 100 yds
 - Joe Bevan 220 yds
 - Percy Bevan 220 yds
 - Alan Puata 440 yds
 - Frank Webb 440 yds
 - Percy Bevan - Life saving certificate.
- .16/4 Two cases of apples (apples-in-school scheme) arrived today.
- .27/5 School opened for second term with a roll number of 9.
- .10/10 Only two pupils present on account of floods.
- .1/12 School calf-judging held here today, being the first time for many years that calves have not been taken to Pukeho. The judges were Mr Pearce (type), Mr Olsen (dairy condition) and Mr Connell, Senior Agriculture Instructor (records). Four calves were entered, two being selected for the Waiwakaiho Show on 17th December.

1942

- .4/5 Henry's horse dropped dead on the way to school this morning. Luckily he wasn't hurt. Father Durney called at the school to see Henry Nuku.
- .7/9 The school has been closed all last term - the senior pupils attending Pukeho in my absence.
- .9/10 Sold all the carrots. Going to buy more seed with the money obtained.
- .2/12 Took children into Inglewood to Primary School Sports. Sports were postponed owing to wet weather in Inglewood. Mr Scherf Manager of Moa Dairy Company kindly showed children over the factory.
- .7/12 Bea took her calf to the Group Judging at Tarata. She gained first for Dairy Type, first for Condition and second for Leading. She got 50 for her notebook.



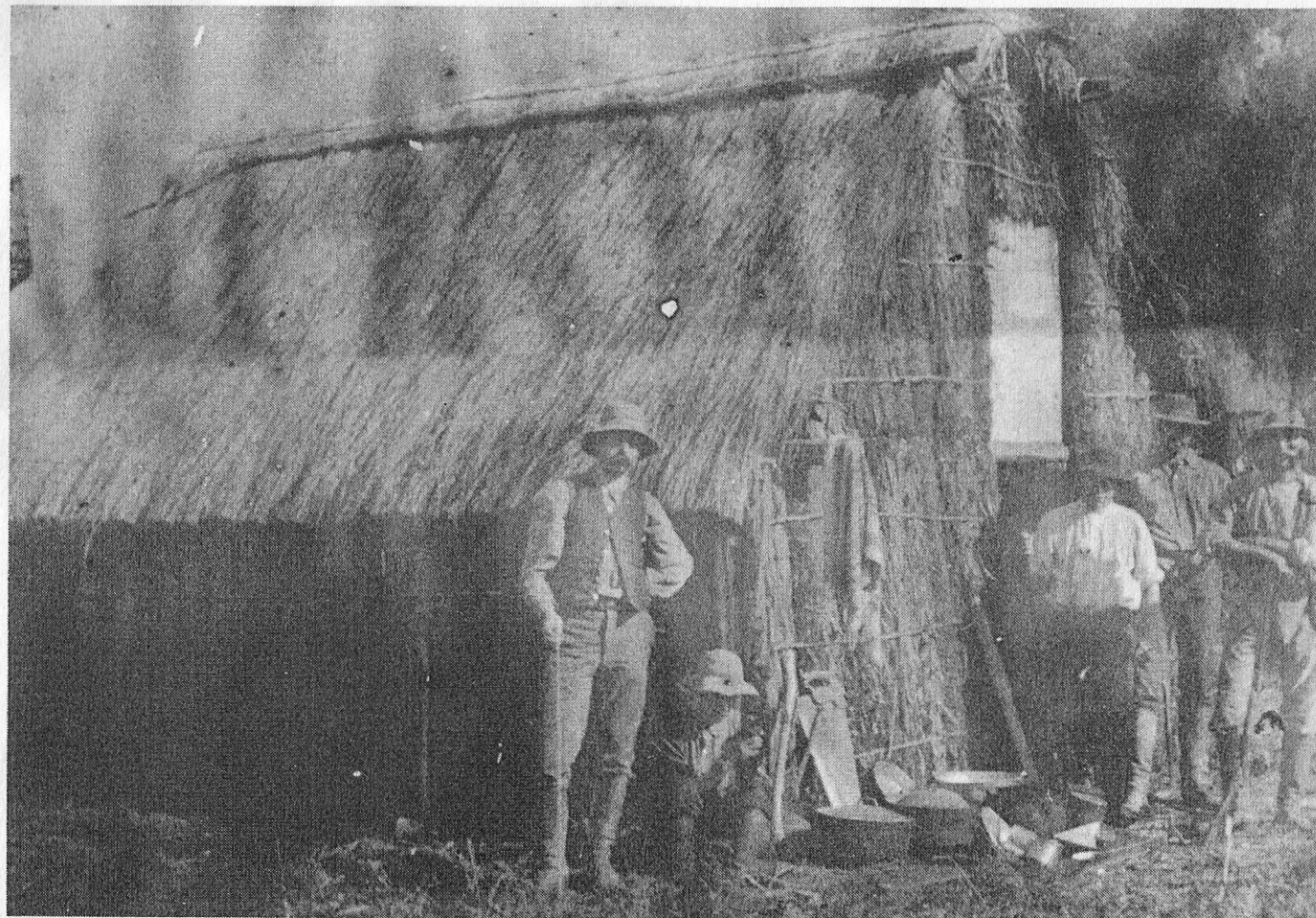
Logging at Purangi.



Felling with crosscut saw and moving log with timberjacks.



Nellie Webb (nee Dowman) packing apples in to 'Big Tree' and 'Shell' boxes. Wagon in background.



Beautifully constructed temporary housing for pioneers at Purangi. c1895.



1943

- .1/2 School opened with a roll of 6 (3 boys and 3 girls).
- .8/2 School did not start until 9.45 am. I was unable to be here until then owing to flood waters across the road at Kaimata and Purangi. Had to leave the car the other side of Purangi Bridge and walk through water. Children from Ngatoto Road late too.
- .9/2 Children picked peaches. Shared them out and took them home.
- .24/2 The Pukeho Teacher and children visited the school today. Had songs, games, speeches and competitions. Mrs Watkins and Mrs Bertrand arrived with afternoon tea.
- .19/3 Visited Tarata School for a combined day with the Tarata, Motukawa and Matau Schools.
- .19/8 Received 200 cabbage plants for school plot.
- .11/9 School closed today in celebration of the capitulation of Italy. 10.9.1943.
- .25/9 School used as polling-booth for the Purangi District.

1944

- .10/2 Took children to Pukeho for a combined day.
- .16/2 Picked peaches. A very good crop.
- .2/3 The infant children went to Tarata in the afternoon for Diphtheria inoculation.
- .19/6 Maori pupils away for Tangi at Tarata. Their chief, Kapua, died.
- .11/8 Sent away toys for Patriotic Bazaar at Inglewood.
- .12/9 Collected up a box of books to send away to the boys overseas.
- .26/10 Took the children to Inglewood to the Dental Clinic.
- .23/11 Took the children down to Tarata. Played baseball and longball. Mr Cameron AA Member showed pictures.

1945

- .5/2 School opened with a roll of 4 boys and 2 girls
- .22/2 Had the school picnic at Onaero Beach. Mr Watkins and Mr Bertrand kindly provided transport.
- .19/6 Dug up crop of parsnips in school garden. Very poor crop.
- .16/7 In the weekend committee put up new tank.
- .15/9 End of the War. Received news of Japan's surrender.
- .28/10 School closed at mid-day on account of flood.
- .18/12 Nobody present at school owing to measles.

1946

- .4/2 School opened with a roll of 3 boys and 3 girls.
- .6/8 Opened Purangi School after being closed since June 28th, through lack of a teacher. Roll 6, present 4.
- .20/8 Supplies of blotting paper, nibs and drawing pins arrived today. In the gardening period the boys dug the garden and the girls transplanted pinks, stocks and pansies from boxes into the main garden.
- .29/9 As peas were up the senior boys staked them.
- .15/10 Children taken into Inglewood to the dental clinic.
- .28/11 School was closed yesterday as it was election day and the school was used as a booth. Dwarf beans are now 2½" high and growing rapidly.
- .16/12 Final tidying and cleaning of grounds completed and all tools have been thoroughly oiled and cleaned. Tools in the cupboard are: Lawnmower (1), Spade (1), Rakes (2), Draw Hoes (1), Push Hoes (1), Trowels (1), Forks (1), Hand Forks (2). The road hedge has been cut and a new fence dividing the play-ground and the horse paddock is under construction.

1947

- .4/2 School roll 5. 3 boys and 2 girls.
- .7/2 Miss Anderson, the District Health Nurse, today visited the school. 2 children have deficient eye-sight and 1 child is recommended for Children's Health Camp.
- .3/3 Received an invitation to Whangamomona Sports which will be held on Saturday March 8th.
- .28/7 Holiday given by Field Marshal Lord Montgomery.
- .22/8 The Roll of Honour will be unveiled here tomorrow afternoon.
- .8/9 The school was scrubbed during the holidays. The Roll of Honour was not unveiled as the vicar did not arrive.
- .21/11 Calf judging at Tarata. Brian took his calf and got second for leading, also 50 for his book. School went down in afternoon.
- .1/12 All schools closed as a result of Infantile Paralysis in North Island.

1948

- .2/2 Owing to Infantile Paralysis, pupils will not return till March 30th. Correspondence lessons are being distributed.
 - .31/3 School reopened after Easter.
 - .26/4 Received pamphlets and stickers for NZ Appeal for Children.
 - .7/5 B M Webb signed book for last time.
 - .12/8 With the commencement of the bus run today the Purangi children are now to be conveyed to Matau School distance four miles. School furniture and equipment was moved to Matau also, for use in the school there.
- (A comprehensive list of items taken was listed).

School Roll 12.9.1901 - 1.3.1948

Atapu, Nin Awa
Andrew, Caroline A
Allen, Mary Irene
Andresen, Ethel
Andreson, Joan
Archer, Joy

Bertrand, Harriet
Bertrand, Winnie
Brough, Pearl
Bertrand, Fergus
Bertrand, David
Bertrand, Bennett
Butters, Bettie
Bertrand, Roimata Aurora
Bevins, Norman Frank
Bevins, Eileen Ruby
Bevins, Ada Emma
Butters, Peggie
Butters, Dorothy
Bevan, Nola
Bevan, Percy
Bertrand, Myrna Loy Carolina
Bevan, Joe
Bevan, Theresa

Chapman, Leslie Walter
Chapman, Reginald Basset
Chapman, Isobel Evelyn
Canterbury, George
Crozier, Doris
Canterbury, Charlie
Corkill, Maureen
Corkill, Janice
Caldwell, Raymond E

Dowman, Harry Louis
Dowman, George James
Dowman, Rodolph William
Davis, Walker Taranui (Waka DavisTaranui)

Dunn, Irene May
Drake, Robert
Dowman, Kathleen
Drake, Cyril
Dawn, Richard Sydney (Webb)
Dowman, Justin Bradcock Jubilee

Epo, Harriet
Ellison, Naomi Blanche
Edwards, Frances
Epo, Tume

Fletcher, Rosalie
Fletcher, Cyril
Fletcher, Bert
Fletcher, Alicia Miriam
Fletcher, Raymond
Fletcher, Valerie
Fletcher, Shirley

Fletcher, Rosalie
Fletcher, Cyril
Fletcher, Bert
Fletcher, Alicia Miriam
Fletcher, Raymond
Fletcher, Valerie
Fletcher, Shirley

Graham, Isabella
Graham, Margaret Elizabeth
Greening, Henry Rayford
Greening, Joseph Tatum
Greening, Alice Constance

Henry, Dick
Herlihy, Maurice
Hope, Ruby
Hope, Ester
Hope, Cecelia
Hope, Robert
Hope, Doris
Hill, Bennett
Hardwood, Doris
Happy, Levinia
Hora
Hinemokai
Hancox, William Harold
Hancox, Clifford Arnold

Jury, Thomas

Kapua, Arthur
Kira, Lucy
Kendall, Thomas
Kendall, Elizabeth
Kini
Kawa, Hore
Kahurangi, Tira
Kilmister, Jack
Kilmister, Jean
Kilmister, Isla

Leech, Laurie Bell
Leech, Margaret Isabelle
Leech, Barbara
Long, John George

Morgan, Mary Sophia
Morgan, Matilda
Mace, Laurence Roy
McMullian, Alex
Mills, Ida
Mika
Martin, Emma
Martin, Jimmy
McLean, Archibald
McLean, Cyril
Mathews, Leslie R
Mathews, Doris
Mathews, Richard
Mathews, Laurence

Mathews, Laurence
 Mathews, Billie
 Marshall, Ethel Rose
 Marshall, Merwyn Albert
 Mounsey, Margaret
 Mounsey, Audrey
 Mounsey, Selwyn
 Mounsey, Lesa
 Mounsey, Stephen
 Mounsey, Margaret Evelyn
 Mounsey, Maude
 Mounsey, Rene
 Mounsey, Jack
 Mounsey, Sadie

Ngawini, Whaia
 Newman, John William
 Newman, Arthur
 Neilson, Frances
 Neilson, Murray
 Nuku, Johnny
 Nuku, Fanny
 Nuku, Henry
 Nuku, Mary
 Nuku, Lu James
 Nuku, Hazel Rose
 Nuku, Rita Elizabeth
 Nuku, William

Powell, William Henry
 Powell, Gladys Elizabeth
 Peri, George
 Puata, Mingi
 Puata, Taa Ko
 Puata, Sarah
 Puata, Lena Poki
 Puata, William
 Puata, Alan Whangi
 Puata, Doreen
 Puata, Albert
 Puata, Ron
 Pennington, Alfred
 Pennington, Beatrice Manu
 Pennington, Ruth
 Pennington, Flora
 Pennington, Francis Herbert
 Pennington, John
 Pennington, Frederick Lionel
 Pennington, Norman Roy
 Pennington, Victor Richard
 Pennington, Dulcie Nora
 Pennington, Minnie
 Pakanga, Mae Tohe

Riggall, Edward Clarence
 Riggall, Doris Marjorie
 Raumati, Kamariera
 Reihana, Terau Tao
 Rangi
 Rolfe, Doris Emily
 Rolfe, Hector Walter
 Rolfe, William Walter
 Ru, William

Ru, Annie
 Ru, Winnie
 Reremai, Robert
 Rosewarne, Walter
 Rosewarne, Percy

Silk, Frederick Nemes
 Silk, Meta Louise
 Silk, Herbert Revel
 Silk, Phyllis Jean
 Smith, George Edward
 Stockley, William Joseph
 Savage, Evelyn May

Tume, (Bertrand), William
 Tumi, Nero
 Thomas, Vivian
 Thomas, Alban
 Tukapua
 Thomas, Jack Heston
 Tume, Epo
 Tume, (Whetu), Ellen
 Tume, (Epo) Jack
 Tohe, Repeka
 Taylor, Edna
 Teika, George
 Teika, Joseph
 Teika, Blossom
 Teika, William
 Teika, Nona
 Teika, Alan
 Teika, Leo
 Teika, Tom

Watkins, David Bruce
 Watkins, Lynette Rene
 Watkins, Henry Stephen
 Watkins, Brian Richard
 Wills, Ethel
 Webb, Frances Marian
 Waka, Davis Taranui (Davis Walker Taranui)
 Webb, Arthur John Travers
 Wilks, Horace
 Whetu, Ngira
 Williscroft, Eileen
 Wereta, Thomas
 Watson, Ronald
 Watson, Frederick
 Watson, William
 Winter, Mona
 Winter, Irene
 Winter, Arthur
 Winter, Violet
 Webb, Unajessima S C
 Webb, Ivor P C
 Watson, Joan
 Woisin, Vernon
 Woisin, Ruby
 Woisin, Ina
 Woisin, Ethel
 White, Dinah
 Webb, Patricia Marian
 Webb, Frances Richard
 Webb, Beatrice Maude

The following is a list of children, residing in Purangi, who attended schools outside the district following the closure of the Purangi School in 1948:

MATAU SCHOOL:

Bertrand, Rowena
 Bertrand, Kaye
 Bertrand, Peter
 Bertrand, Graham
 Cossey, Kevin
 Cossey, Shirley
 Cossey, Spencer
 Cossey, Lynare
 Devine, Charles
 Devine, Bruce
 Devine, Jennifer
 Devine, Terence
 Falke, Susan
 Grossman, Joe
 Grossman, Elizabeth
 Hannah, Darryn
 Hannah, Brett
 Hannah, Merryn (also Correspondence School)
 Hindrup, Sandra
 Hindrup, Michael
 Hindrup, Neville
 Hindrup, Barbara
 Kaye, Norma
 Mason, Pamela
 Mason, Alice
 Mason, Paul
 Mason, Thomas (Tom) (also Correspondence School)
 Neilson, Tom
 Neilson, Bill
 Ngeru, Mary
 Ngeru, Rona
 Ngeru, Edward
 Nuku, Lou
 Nuku, Hazel
 Nuku, John
 Nuku, Bernadette
 Nuku, Kyra
 Nuku, Nina
 Nuku, Clarence (Campbell)
 Nuku, Jeffery
 Price, John
 Price, Judith

Thomas, Wayne
 Thomas, Lee
 Vickers, Lloyd
 Vickers, Mark
 Vickers, Brett
 Watkins, Brian
 Watkins, Steven
 Watkins, Rene
 Watkins, David
 Watkins, Lindsay
 Watkins, Christopher
 Webb, Carolyn
 Webb, Susan
 Webb, Pamela
 Webb, Peter (also Tarata School)

TARATA SCHOOL:

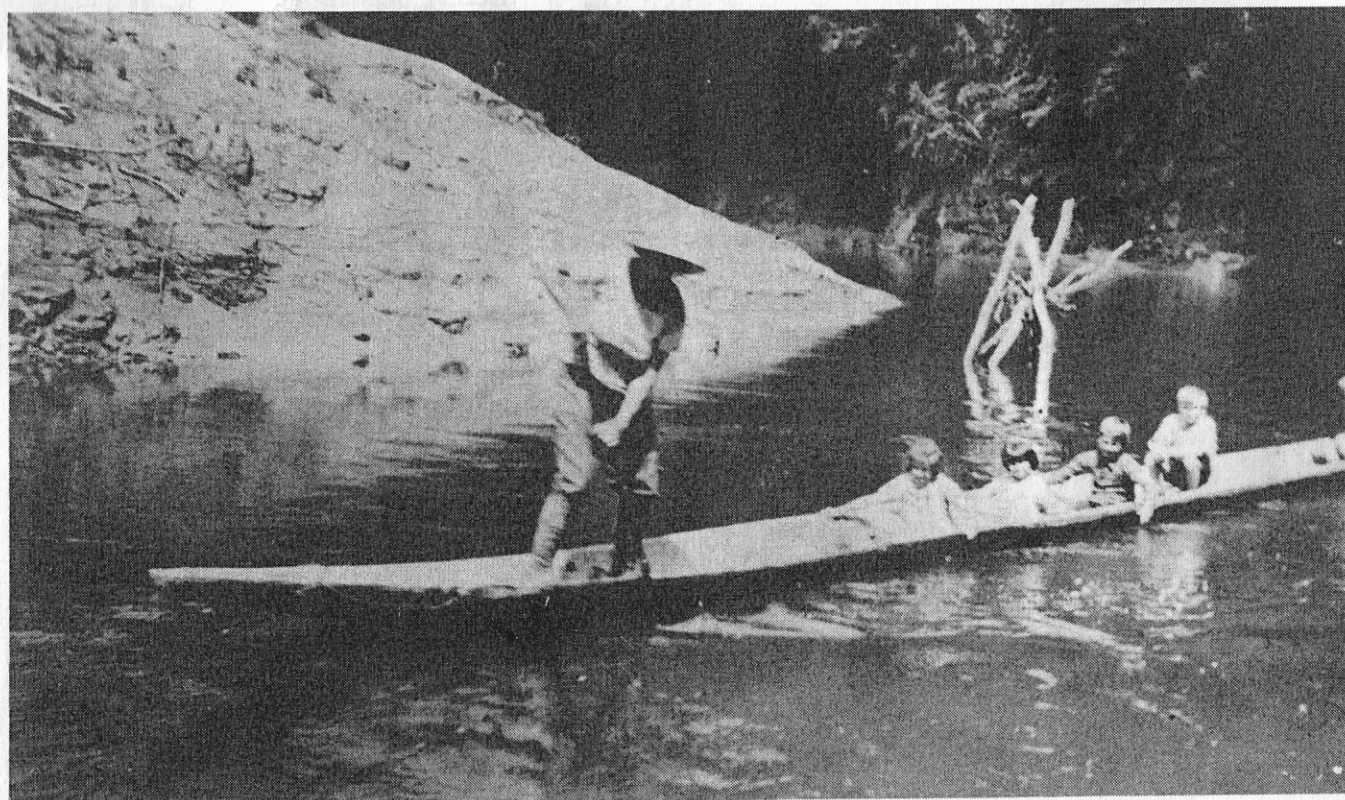
George, Kerrin
 George, Melanie
 George, Carina
 George, Tristan
 George, Simon
 George, Damon
 Gooch, Kristelle
 Gooch, Saphire
 Gooch, Tarin
 McGarvey, Liam
 McGarvey, Evan
 Sanders, Jeffrey
 Sanders, Karla
 Sanders, Robert
 Webb, Matthew

HUIROA SCHOOL:

Mounsey, Sandra
 Mounsey, Sharon
 Mounsey, Terry
 Mounsey, Wayne
 Cleaver, Matthew (also Matau)
 Cleaver, Alanah " "
 Galvin, Kirsty " "



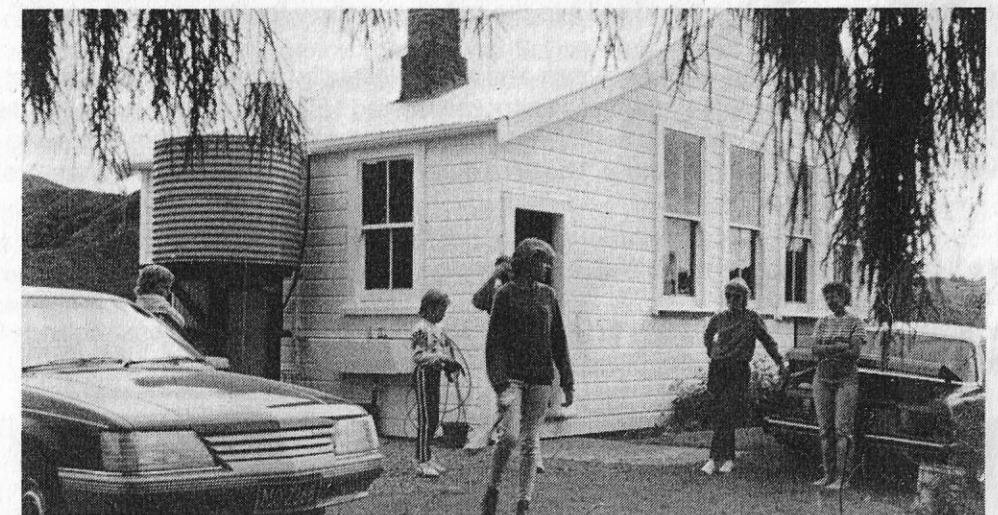
Preparing to cross the Waitara River at Purangi. There are at least 9 men and 6 horses in this photo. c1890.



Nell Webb (nee Dowman) with pole canoe made by Isaac Whakaruru, owned then by Kapua Keepa. Since been lost in a flood in Waitara River.



This photo shows a walnut tree beside the school. c1940.



Purangi School in April 1987, after being repiled, reroofed and painted.

Purangi School closed on the 7 May 1948 and was not reopened. Purangi children attended Matau School to which they travelled the best way they could, horseback mostly. On 12 August 1948 the then Matau teacher Mr H A Smith commenced a bus run from Purangi to Matau. The Education Department bus commenced in 1956 but was withdrawn at the end of 1968 owing to dwindling numbers (five). This forced the Purangi pupils' parents to make alternative arrangements for their children's education. Some took correspondence lessons, and others travelled by private car to meet the Tarata School bus. At the time of writing (1991) a van comes into the Purangi area and transports up to a dozen children to the school bus at Alan and Dorothy Enright's, reversing the procedure on the return journey. The primary aged children attend Tarata School and the senior children attend Inglewood High.

One or two incidents of the early days are worth recording. Slips often blocked the road making it impossible for the teacher to ride over. On at least one occasion the Anglican Minister, the Rev Reeves took the school. He told the children the story of Joseph and his brothers. Bill Bertrand said that this was his first knowledge of the Bible.

Swimming for certificates was done in the river near a ford by Watkins' farm. In the earlier years at the Christmas picnic (often held at the Domain) the children were each presented with a book. "Presented by the Purangi School Committee" (signed) F W Pennington, Chairman. These were passed round among the pupils as there was very little reading matter available. The school committee would order a number of toys as prizes for race winners.

MR WILLIAM NORTON BERTRAND

Mr Bertrand was respectfully referred to by most people as Bill Bertrand. As a boy he lived with the Tume whanau and was known as William Tume. He was born in Urenui in 1896 but was brought up and educated in Purangi.

As a child Mr Bertrand could remember filling calabashes with drinking water, and there were special ones for preserving pork and birds. He remembered the hundreds of pigeons that were caught in snares and preserved in their own fat in the calabashes. On one occasion he'd seen 120 bags of fungus on a wagon. The old storekeeper at Purangi would give the pickers credit, and he would then sell it to Chew Chong.

Every family in Purangi had a canoe, even the European settlers. Mr Bertrand owned a ten foot totara canoe and used it to "tear" up and down the Waitara River, and when he was older he took stores in it up to Whangamomona where he was chopping bush. In his interview with Mr Walter he related how Mr Young used a canoe the length of which was the width of the river, and it was used as a crossing for his sheep if he wanted to bring them out for a sale.

He talked about spiking totaras as they came down in floods. They would cut the totaras into posts and sell them. Any big rimus that came down they would spike as well and cut them for battens or slabs.

He remembered the camps along the roads when the railway was being built through Huiroa and Kioere. He and another chap would buy fruit in Purangi and would take up to a ton of the fruit in a wagonette over to Pohokura down towards Te Wera and sell it to the railways' people for "tuppence a pound".

He began work as a shearer at the age of 15 years and his highest tally for blade shearing in that first year was 96. The next year he got up to 140 sheep and later considered 150 quite a nice day's work. He started work at 5.30 am and shored for 9½ hours a day. He was paid £1.2.6 a hundred. Before he took to shearing he was a fleece-oh and was paid 1/- an hour. The 9/- a day earned fleece-ohing for six shearers was well earned.

In 1914 he bought a motorbike from Mr Walter Bredow.

Mr Bertrand enlisted in the First World War in 1915 after working in a gang of three, bush-felling 600 acres. He returned from the war in 1919 and helped build bridges on the Mangaoapa Road.

Mr Bertrand developed great skill in bush felling being a master at what is known as a drive. During an interview in 1975 with Mr David Walter he describes a drive:

If you got into a certain piece of bush, mostly tall standing trees you scarp them back and front. If you want a tree to go in a certain direction you scarp it with the front scarp facing that way. I'd start at the bottom of a face and many times would chop out half to ¾ acre at a time. The drive starts with one tree way up at the top and it pushes the next two trees and they spread out and spread out until you get down to the bottom. It might be a couple of chain wide at the bottom and there wouldn't be a tree standing. You have to study the timber to understand how brittle it is or how tough and you cut it accordingly so that when the trees from behind push, they'll give. That is where some people made a mistake, they didn't cut them enough.

I'd like to get a big tawa somewhere as a king driver, I'd cut that tree so it wouldn't fall until I'd got it just about off the stump. It would hit on the other trees, riding them. It might land two or three chain down the hill from its stump and ride on top of the other timber. It was really lovely to watch.

The main trees around Purangi were tawas but there were also white pines, maires, totaras, rimus and ratas.

He competed in wood chopping events at sports meetings and was a master axeman. Despite being put on the back mark (handicap) he won many competitions and even beat Ned Shewry twice. He won teasets, dinner sets, medals and cups at various meetings including Lincoln Road 1928, Purangi 1930, Makahu 1931-32 (12" open chop), Huiroa 1935, and Strathmore 1937.

He married Queenie Emma Adlam on 17 March 1920, living firstly on Tumai Street and then in a large home he built at Puketui (46 acres) which he leased in 1925 - Puketui Native Reserve/West Coast Settlement Reserve. Mrs Bertrand milked a small herd of cows for which he purchased a two cow plant. They raised five children. Three of the five children served in the Second World War. Benny was killed in action and Fergus was seriously wounded. He later died in a car accident.

In 1921 Mr Bertrand began working for the Clifton County, and later the Stratford County in the Ngatimaru Riding, at first as a surfaceman and later as a foreman, for a total of 32 years. As time went by he purchased land behind the Purangi School and church, and built another home in the Purangi village. In the 1950s he purchased a sheep and cattle farm (300 acres) in Purangi, part of which had been used for sports days and rugby. He then lived in the house looking over Ngakorako where he built the first airstrip.

In his lifetime Mr Bertrand worked hard. In the summertime he would start at 4 o'clock in the morning regularly - ploughing, getting ready for turnips; he always put in a crop of swedes for the cows. He would knock off at 7 am and then get away to work on the road after breakfast. He would get home at 6 pm, have a cup of tea and return to the farmwork until dark. The horses were always handy and he'd just hook on to them. That went on for about 10 years until he purchased a McCormick B 250 tractor.

Mr Bertrand said that before World War I there were about 40 Europeans counting the children, living in Purangi and over 50 Maoris in the village. Only about ten Maoris remained after the 1919 influenza epidemic.

Always a community-minded citizen Mr Bertrand was a council member for six years. He took an active part in local affairs, being Chairman of the Purangi School Committee for many years, and an active member of the Purangi Domain and Cemetery Board, Hall Committee and Tennis Club. He was captain in the Home Guard during World War Two and had a long standing interest and membership in Lodge Whangamomona and the Masonic Grand Lodge, NZ.

Mr and Mrs Bertrand retired to New Plymouth in 1963. He was very fond of doing wood carving and in his retirement, carved many walking sticks which were given to help raise funds for the Taranaki Hospital Board's Recreation Complex. These beautifully carved pieces are highly treasured and can now be found in many parts of the world.

Mr Bertrand passed away in April 1990 and was buried in the Kopuatama Cemetery at Stratford.



Mr W N (Bill) Bertrand 1896 - 1990.

THE CREAMERY

From Ian Church's book THE STRATFORD INHERITANCE

The Pennington brothers began the Pukemahoe Dairy Factory in 1900 but this gave way to a skimming plant of the Tarata Dairy Company after 1901. F W Pennington operated a private dairy.

From R W Brown's book TE MOA

Whenever any district shall guarantee the milk from 300 cows, the company may erect a creamery.

And so the Purangi creamery commenced operations in 1905 with W (Bill) Newman as manager. Milk was delivered in 20 gallon cans from carts, sledges or trolleys. The clay roads made the delivery of whole milk an unenviable task. A "Tangye" 8 hp horizontal engine supplied power to drive a separator, skim milk pump and a water pump to supply water for cooking and washing. A small high pressure boiler provided steam for sterilising and hot water for washing. The cream was delivered by cart by the manager to the Tarata Dairy Company, of which the Purangi Creamery was a branch.

On 4.2.1910 the Clifton County Council accepted the offer of the Tarata Dairy Company to sell its Purangi Creamery and site for £30, and the Inglewood Record 6.5.1910 published details of the Purangi Creamery Plant being sold:

- 2 hp boiler and fittings
- 5 - beam scales (Fairbanks)
- receiving vat
- weigh can
- S.M. weigh can
- derrick

Cream used to be sent to the Maori Land Co and Fresh Food Dairy Co Wanganui as well as Tarata. Home separation was the reason for the creamery closing.

The manager's cottage was used by council road staff before being sold to Webbs along with the creamery site. Only a concrete slab remains today.

The Taranaki Daily News Reported 6.11.1913 -
District News - Pukeho and Tarata

The factory is turning out ten boxes of butter per day and the supply is gradually rising. Home separation is a big help and cream is being brought from Purangi.

In the Store Ledger Book the Tarata Factory ran the following account with George Hanover for twelve months, probably 1915-16; most of it is for cartage:

January (5) ½ ton coal 9/3, (24) parcel 3', Barnett cream 18/-, Kapua cream 18/-, Tutanuku cream 18/-, Webb cream 18/-, Campbell cream 18/-, A E Taylor cream 18/-, H Lambert cream 13/6, (6) ton coal 18/6, (7) ton coal 18/6, (8) 5 cwt salt 4/7, oil 6', (10) ton coal 18/6, (13) 204 butter boxes 7/-, (12) 9½ cwt 9½ cord firewood 76/-, (15) 6 ton coal £5/19/6, (17) 4 cwt paper 3/8, (21) oil 6d, (24) 202 butter boxes 15/6, (30) 6 ton coal £6/7/7, 352 boxes butter at 17/6 ton £9/1/-

February (14) 6 cwt salt 5/5, (16) truck coal £6/-, (19) 202 butter boxes 51/- (£2/10/-), (21) 5 cwt salt 4/7, 7½ ton butter £6/11/3, cream carting £5/8/-, (24) box 6d.

March (11) ½ ton coal 9/3, (14) truck coal £7/1/-, (25) parcel 6d, (28) truck coal £7/9/-, (26) 204 butter boxes 51/-, (30) oil 6d. Barnett cream 17/4, Kapua 17/4, Tutanuku 17/4, Webb 17/4, Campbell 17/4, Taylor 17/4, H Lambert cream 13/-.

April (9) parcel 3d, (3) wheel 6d, (17) oil 6d, (29) 6 bags salt 5/6, (29) 204 boxes 51/-.

May (2) truck coal £4/10/6, (20) chimney 2/6.

August (17) 6 buckets 2/-, ton salt 16/-, (25) 3 cwt paper 2/5, cylinder 1/-, (27) 4 butter 1/9, (29) oil 1/-.

September (5) parcel 3d, (7) parcel 3d, (8) 17 butter, (10) oil 6d, (15) 3 cwt acid 2/5, (16) parcel 3d, (18) 32 boxes butter 32 empty boxes 8/-, (23) case (cwt) 9d, (24) 21 boxes butter, 204 butterboxes 51/-, (25) 3d, 3 cream cans 1/6, (28) parcel 3d, (29) 15 butter, 85 boxes butter 37/2 (£1/17/2), storage on 6½ ton slag 20/- (£1). Cream carting - Webb 8/-, Campbell 4/-, Tutanuku 8/-.

October 4 weeks ending Oct (29) Webb 20/-, Rutanuku 20/-, Campbell 20/-, H Lambert 20/-, Kapua 10/-.

To 5 weeks ending December (3) Webb 25/-, Tutanuku 25/-, Campbell 25/-, H Lambert 25/-, Kapua 25/-.

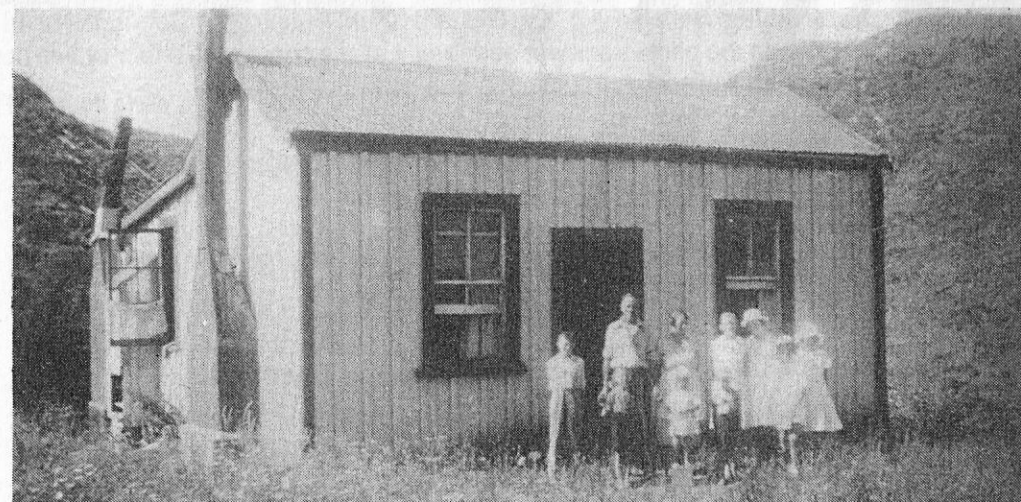
To 4 weeks ending December (31) Webb 20/-, Campbell 20/-, Lambert 20/-, Kapua 20/-, Tutanuku 20/-.

To 4 weeks ending January (28) Webb 20/-, Campbell 20/-, Lambert 20/-, Kapua 20/-, Tutanuku 20/-.

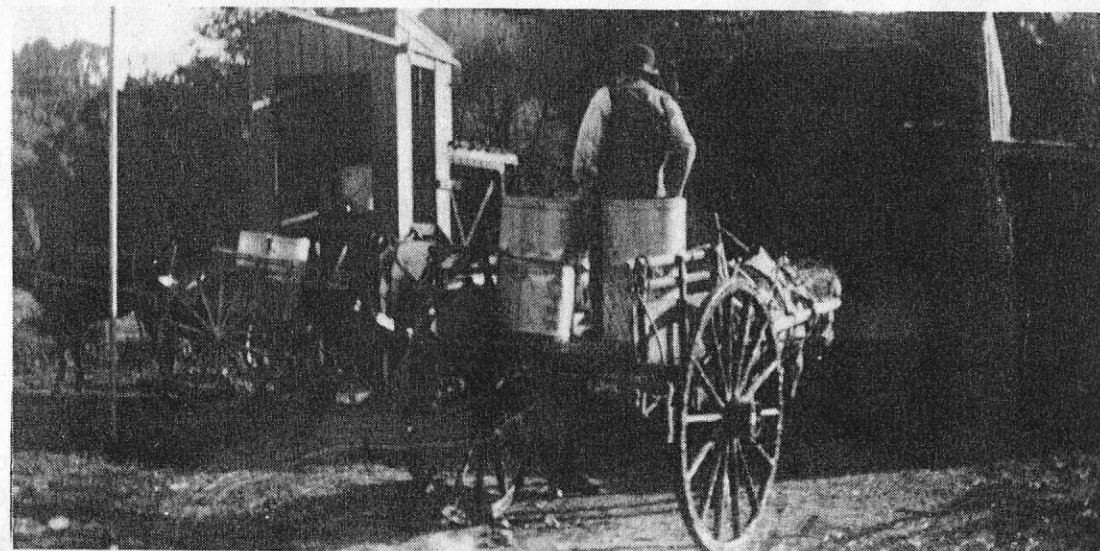
To weeks ending February (28) Webb 20/-, Campbell 20/-, Lambert 20/-, Kapua 20/-, Tutanuku 20/-.

To 5 weeks ending April (1) cream carting Tume 25/-, Kapua 25/-, Campbell 25/-, Webb 25/-, Lambert 25/-.

To 4 weeks ending April (29) cream carting Kapua 20/-, Campbell 20/-, Webb 20/-, Lambert 20/-.



This cottage was built for the Creamery Manager.



Part of the Purangi Creamery c1906, and carts waiting to unload.



Purangi mail coach, right hand side passenger, Mr Tisch, Mayor of New Plymouth who had been visiting his step-daughter, Frank Webb's grandmother.

CARRIERS

It is believed that Joe George was the first regular carrier and he employed Dick and Wilson Johnson who at first used bullocks. Later drivers were Hawke, and Richard (Dick) Pennington. Johnsons used a sledge over the saddle until 1899 when the bridge track was widened. Later a coach with a four or five horse team maintained a daily service to Inglewood.

The following advertisement appeared in a 1892 newspaper:

Public Notice

E B LANGLEY, Carrier,
Between Inglewood, Tarata and Purangi!

Leaves Inglewood every Wednesday morning, returning on Thursdays.

Orders and Parcels may be left at MacKay's Store
Inglewood.

In the "Inglewood Record" 1898 the following advertisement appeared:

W W Johnson, General Carrier Between Inglewood, Tarata and Purangi.
His Express will leave Tarata every Monday Morning, Wednesday Morning,
and Saturday Morning for Inglewood, returning same days.
Charges for passengers - Single Journey 2s; Return 3s.
All parcels and letters left at Julian's Railway Hotel will be promptly attended to.
Other days in the week will be devoted to carrying heavy goods to Tarata and
Purangi.

W W Johnson

From "The Budget" Saturday 16 November 1901:

November 9 Our Inglewood correspondent writes:-
A serious accident happened on Friday morning to Mr Cheyne's coach, when on the way from
Purangi to Inglewood. The coach and horses went over the zig-zag along Mr Whittaker's front-
age with the result that two horses were killed and the coach considerably damaged. Luckily no
passengers were on board and the driver, Mr Rountree, on seeing the danger jumped off and
escaped any serious injury.

"Budget and Weekly Herald" 21 May 1904 reported:

Mr William Crozier of Tarata and Purangi has sold his coaching and plant business to
Mr L Wind who has taken over the concern.

The "Inglewood Record" ran the following advertisement on 9 May 1910:

Inglewood - Tarata - Purangi
Mail Coach Service

Having taken over the above mail service, the coach will run daily, leaving Purangi
at 7 am, arriving Inglewood 9.45 am. Returning leaves Inglewood at 1 pm arriving
Purangi 6.30 pm.

Heavy goods wagon also on the road. Fares strictly moderate. A considerable
reduction allowed on return tickets if taken out on commencing the journey.

Booking offices: Royal Mail Stables
Rata Street (next Athletic Hall)
Inglewood

T Waite Proprietor

Hawke Brothers had the carrying business about 1911.

This report appeared in the paper dated 12 August 1911:

THE TARATA COACH

What might have been a serious accident was averted today (4 August) by skilful
driving, when the four horses of the Tarata coach bolted from the centre of the town.
Mr George Hanover stuck to the reins, and although the traces of the leaders came
loose, he pulled them up by the cemetery with no further damage.

The "Taranaki Daily News" ran the following advertisements on 6 November 1913:

Tarata Coach - George Hanover - Proprietor

Timetable

Coach leaves Purangi at 5.30 am Daily for Inglewood, and leaves on the return trip
at 2 pm.

Inwards		Outwards	
Leave		Leave	
Purangi	5.30 am	Inglewood	2 pm
Pukeho	6.30 am	Kaimata	2.45 pm
Tarata	7.30 am	Tarata	4 pm
Kaimata	8.45 am	Pukeho	5 pm
Arrive		Arrive	
Inglewood	9.30 am	Purangi	6 pm

All orders or parcels left at store, Purangi, Mr T Waite's Stables, Tarata, or Royal Mail
Stables, Inglewood, will receive prompt attention.

It would appear that automobiles replaced coach and horses soon after as this advertisement appeared
in the paper about 1917:

Motor Rail Service

Inglewood - Tarata - Purangi

Car leaves Purangi daily at 7 am, Tarata 8.30 am.

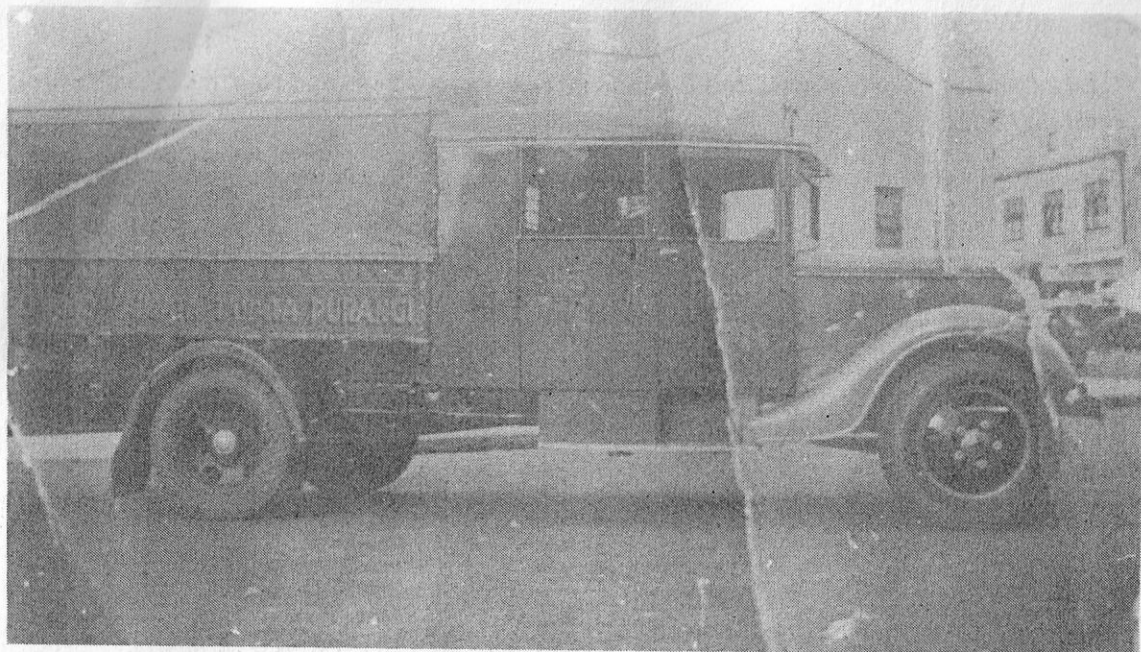
arrives Inglewood 9.30 am.

Leaves Inglewood at 3.10 pm, Tarata 4 pm, and arrives Purangi 5.30 pm.

Terms on application

Tindle and Scott Mail Contractors

Other drivers (not in sequence) were Lew Trigger, Glover, Tindle, killed in action WWI; Hal Dowman,
horses and buggy; Fisher drove car passengers and mail, Taylor, Kilmister 1922-25 (or thereabouts),
Charles Ingles, Crapper, Sid Crowhurst, killed WWII.



Daily Passenger & Goods Service, Inglewood-Kaimata-Tarata-Purangi. Vehicle owned by J S Fletcher, Phone 78.

Monday 9 January 1922:

Inglewood - Tarata - Purangi mail service (Archibald and Stuck) now running tri-weekly.

The "Taranaki Daily News" recorded on Monday 10 July 1933 that S W Hutchen was the Inglewood-Purangi mail contractor. However it records his farewell on Tuesday 21 August 1934:

Tarata-Purangi combination send-off to Mr S W (Stan) Hutchen, bus business recently sold. Presented travelling-bag and military hair-brushes. Mr J S (Spence) Fletcher, new owner.

On Friday 15 July 1938 Mr Fletcher's farewell is recorded:

Farewell at Purangi for Mr and Mrs J S Fletcher. New driver Mr R Blackwell.

Dick Blackwell drove for Inglewood Motors, but while he served overseas in the Second World War his relief driver was Mr Savage; Robbie Simmons owner/driver 1940s; Dick Watkins drove at times for Inglewood Motors; Terry Devine owner/driver 1949; Phil Jefferies owner/driver 1965.

The newspaper published the following article on 6 October 1965:

Terry Devine

After 17 years of delivering the goods to the people of the Kaimata, Tarata and Purangi areas, Terry Devine has sold his business and now plans a trip to Tasmania to see his parents. Terry isn't too happy about selling out. Thinking back he recalled the times when he wondered if the mail would get through and how the settlers teamed up to see that it did. "We used tractors, boats and once even a pulley across a river when floods washed the road out", he said. Another time the Tarata bridge looked ready to collapse so he warned his passengers of the possible danger. Originally he had a double-cab van but changed to a truck and purely goods cartage four years ago.

Jock Woodward began the rural run from Inglewood to Purangi in 1962. He drove for Inglewood Motors and retired in 1988.

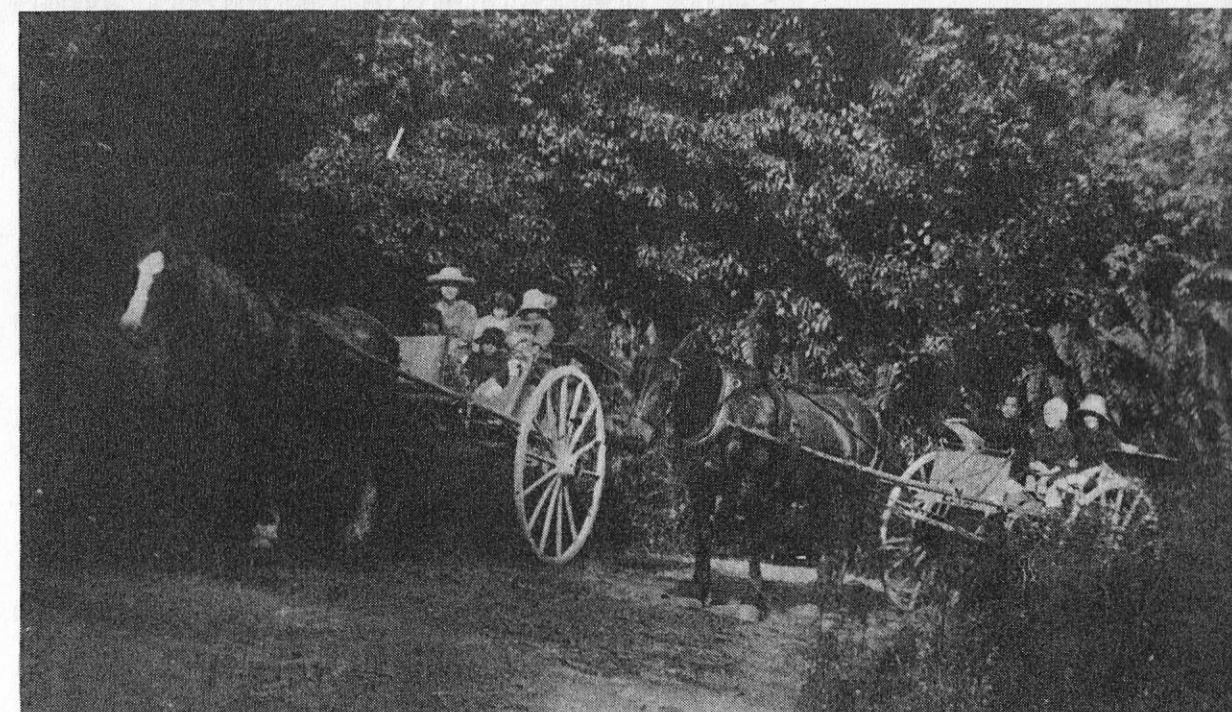
A newspaper report of 24 March 1988 reads:

The retirement function for Mr Jock Woodward was attended by about 180 people. He began work for Inglewood Motors in 1952 and was given the rural delivery run which stretched from Inglewood Saleyards to the Purangi Bridge in 1962.

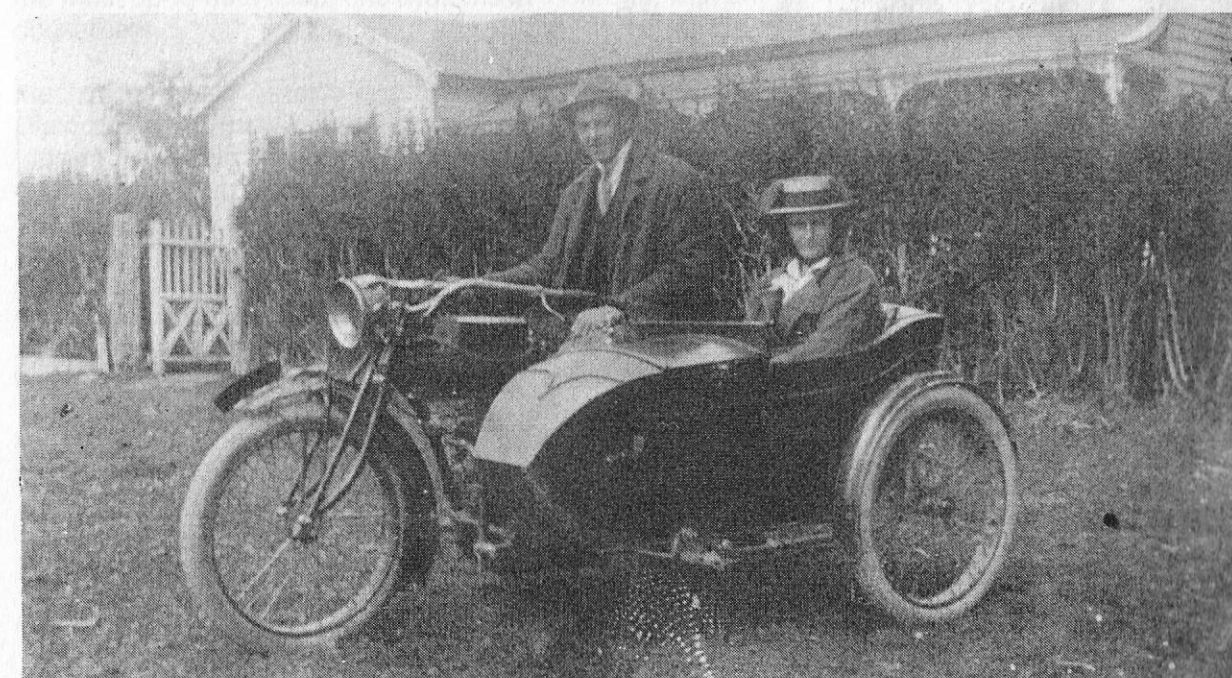
Mr Woodward said the reason he did this run for so long was that he found the people so friendly and courteous on the run. "They made the job worthwhile. There was never a shortage of a cup of tea." The event that sticks in his mind was in 1970 when the district was flooded. He had to drive his truck through three feet of water and managed to cover all his area except the Purangi Saddle. The farmers had come down on bikes to get their mail and bread and they said "You got through Jock", and I said "The mail must go through".

Mr Woodward is a keen rose grower with more than 150 roses and this is what he thinks should keep him occupied during his retirement.

Since 1988 Nancy Thompson has been the driver.



c1930 on Purangi Saddle.



A different means of transport. Mr and Mrs A J Webb, in a sidecar c1926.